



ART & DESIGN MAGAZINE : 2007

the academy

Academy of the Arts, University of Tasmania, TAFE Tasmania - Inveresk Cultural Precinct, Launceston - Australia



the academy :

Editor :

Professor Vincent McGrath

Produced by :

Ellissa Nolan

Marketing and Development Officer

Academy of the Arts

School of Visual and Performing Arts

University of Tasmania

Locked Bag 1362 Launceston TAS Australia 7250

Telephone : 03 6324 4423

Email : Ellissa.Nolan@utas.edu.au

Website : www.acadarts.utas.edu.au



Design and Printing :

at+m integrated marketing

www.atmmarketing.com.au

Photography :

front and back cover : Rob Burnett



the academy : has been printed using the Rethink® Environmental Management System developed by at+m integrated marketing to create environmentally responsible processes for print and production. Rethink® Certificate No. 29686. For more information visit : www.rethinkems.com.au

Copyright © 2007 All rights reserved.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, transmitted in any form of by any other means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior permission from the publisher.

CONTENTS

Feature Articles :

Bolt - David Hamilton	04
Memorials to the Vanishing - Dr Astrid Wootton	06
A conversation with Ian McClennan	08

General :

On the Horizon - Professor Vincent McGrath	10
Sarah McCormack & Stompin	11
Why do students choose to study at the Academy of the Arts?	12

New Staff Profile :

Hood - Dr Troy Ruffels - School of Visual and Performing Arts	13
---	----

Events :

Island to Island - Professor Vincent McGrath	14
Tasmanian Creative Arts Summer School - Ellissa Nolan	15

Artist-in-Residence :

Professor Roger Gaudreau - Dr Wayne Hudson	16
--	----

Staff Research Project

Gesture Machine - Robert Lewis	17
Changing Directions - Stuart Shaw	18

New Staff Profile :

John Swindells - TAFE Tasmania	18
--------------------------------	----

CentrStage :

Turning Professional - Daniel Lizotte	19
---------------------------------------	----

Alumni Achievement :

Dr Shaun Wilson	20
Juneo Lee	20
Junko Go	20
Sam Curtain	21
Sumeena Keshow	21
Chau Ek Kay	21

Awards :

Sue Henderson	21
---------------	----

Public Art Commission :

Marisa Molin	22
--------------	----

Undergraduate Student :

Lansana Feika	23
---------------	----

International Student Exchange :

Ross Byers	24
------------	----

International Students :

Angela Miller	25
Ng Sek-Yan (Seki)	26

The Academy of the Arts is a dual-sector University and TAFE arts enterprise located in world-class facilities on the 17-hectre cultural precinct in the City of Launceston. The Academy of the Arts enjoys the privileged position of being a comprehensive arts education and training site offering awards from Certificate and Diploma levels, through to Bachelors, Masters and Phd Degrees.



It is a pleasure to share with you some of the Academy of the Arts highlights from the past nine months and introduce you to some of our initiatives for 2008. As you read through this publication you will find that we are very much connected to our students and alumni, our community, the arts professions and the wider global network of arts and related practices.

Professor Vincent McGrath : WELCOME

The Academy of the Arts is a very special place where creative intelligence is nurtured and developed. The Academy is a place where ideas, critical reflection, analysis, opinion and expression take centre stage. We consider our students to be highly creative. They are people who can acquire skills and use existing knowledge to convey new meanings that are personal and distinctive and also possess the capacity to influence and innovate. The Academy of the Arts is a dynamic, multi-discipline arts environment. Cross-disciplinary engagement is encouraged at all levels of study to illuminate experience and to present diverse perspectives. The value of traditions and cultural differences are respected and the language of new technologies is a standard part of the teaching and learning environment.

Significantly, The Academy highlights the recent successes of some of our students, alumni and staff. These successes draw attention to the nature and potential future of contemporary arts in a world of opportunities for motivated creative arts practitioners.

The Academy of the Arts is a unique place where you, too, can think creatively and build your ideas into reality.

Professor Vincent McGrath
Head of School
Visual and Performing Arts
Academy of the Arts



Stephen Watts : WELCOME

The health of the Arts community in Tasmania is reflected in the high energy and level of activity evident at the Academy. The courses and programs offered by UTAS and TAFE not only provide a wide range of options and pathways, but together create a stimulating environment in which students are able to flourish. With a watching brief on the media convergence we are encouraging experimentation and acquisition of skills in a wide range of contemporary art forms, whilst still nurturing the traditional pursuits in visual arts.

The students attending the Academy have access to great mentors, inspiring surroundings and the encouragement and opportunity to exhibit their work. We are continually delighted by the successes of our alumni and the contributions they are making in the art world within Tasmania, interstate and throughout the world.

Stephen Watts
Team Leader, TAFE Tasmania
Academy of the Arts



David Hamilton : **CREATOR OF 'BOLT'**

In late 2004 the University of Tasmania, through the aegis of the School of Visual and Performing Arts, instigated a sculpture commission as the University's contribution to mark the city of Launceston's 2006 'It's About Us' celebrations. The commission guidelines suggested that the sculpture be located on the lawn area between the Stone building and the Blue Café and that it be a 'signature' work, acting as a symbol and focal point for the creative arts at the Inveresk Cultural Precinct.

My submission titled 'BOLT' proposed a forty-eight metre long acid green steel sculpture composed of three separate fragments, one of which would pierce through the corner of the Stone building to create a visual connection between the building and its site on the front lawn. The sculpture was commissioned in mid 2005 and finally installed at the School of Visual and Performing Arts at Inveresk on 7 March 2007.

As the name implies, 'BOLT' takes the form of a lightning bolt that appears as a gesture of the drawn line to provide a unifying strike through the site. It aims to reference the energy of its location, especially that of the Academy of the Arts. I also wanted the

sculpture to respond through its form to the past importance of the Powerhouse building and to the current and future role of the site as a vibrant arts precinct for Launceston.

The lightning bolt or thunder bolt as a divine manifestation has been a powerful symbol throughout history and appears in many mythologies, often as the weapon of the sky or storm god. The lightning bolt or thunderbolt image can be found in many cultures as an unsurpassed symbol of dramatic and instantaneous retributive destruction. The most familiar thunderbolt weapon known to the West is that of the Greek god Zeus.

The lightning bolt association has also been used as a metaphor for ideas and creativity since ancient times. Ideas and artistic inspiration were seen as arriving in a thunderbolt of white-hot intensity to generate a moment of creative daring and insight. The symbol still continues into the modern world as a prominent icon, often entering our consciousness as a part of our educational fabric during our formative years. The image, frequently representing supernatural power appears on children's toys, in cartoons and more recently as a scar on the forehead of Harry Potter of book and film fame. What better symbol for a creative arts environment?

My present research interest lies in the space beyond the physicality of the sculptural fragment and how the shape and form of the fragment is important in determining the direction and accuracy of the response from the viewer.

In art, we subconsciously accept that a fragment of a whole may precipitate a vision of the whole: that is, if we examine say, in an archaeological dig, a fragment of an ancient work of art, we can visualise what the whole must have been. On observing a fragment, the viewer either fills in the gaps between the pieces and imagines those parts which are missing, or in some cases a viewer may accept the fragmented part as a new whole object.

'BOLT' invites the viewer to complete the work in their minds from the three fragmental prompts given by the sculpture. In a full appreciation of the work a viewer might believe that the sculpture originates in the sky, in a North Easterly direction above the site, then stabs through the corner of the Stone Building, bounces across the ground before



David Hamilton



'Bolt' in progress

plunging underground below a pathway and then re-emerging and propelling skyward in a South Westerly direction.

Clearly a sculpture project of this magnitude would never have come to fruition without the solid financial support of the Launceston business community and I feel privileged to have worked with the following firms during the construction of this sculpture.

Onesteel Metaland, SEMF Pty Ltd, FairBrother Pty Ltd, Haywards Steel Fabrication & Construction and Dulux Protective Coatings.

As Vice Chancellor Daryl Le Grew remarked at the opening, "Collaborations such as this, between the University and the local business community, are a powerful indication of the very positive way in which we can all celebrate and recognise both the past and future for our city and region".



Dr Astrid Wootton

MEMORIALS TO THE VANISHING

Recent work by Robyn Glade-Wright



Traditional textiles are mysterious works of nature. They live and breathe their intimate connection to nature through their very fabrics: wool, cotton, silk thread; through their dyes, rose madder, indigo and others. Textiles speak for nature in ways that other arts can only dream of. They celebrate its beauty, intrinsic to their very substance, and make nature alive once more through their existence.

Photography: Brett Withington



This is not the case with Robyn Glade-Wright's recent textile work, although beauty is certainly one of its main themes. Instead, Glade-Wright's work takes us upon an intimate and tragic journey, through the heart of the wilderness, to see the dead – the filmy and insubstantial ghosts of extinct plants which are commemorated in her icy wreaths, harbingers of loss, death and sadness.

Glade-Wright's recent PhD exhibition, *Making Nature: Extinct Tasmanian Plants*, took the form of ten organza. The barely-contrasting colour and the fine texture of her tiny embroidered stitches allow the work to hide amidst the large square sheets of filmy fabric which, attached only at the top corners and sitting an inch from the wall's hard surface, billow softly with natural currents of air.

The exhibition's use of illumination is critical. The works themselves should perhaps be described, in material terms, as pieces of organza, thread and shadow. Spotlit dimly but directly from above and behind the viewer, each piece projects its shadow-plant onto the white wall behind it. These ghostly remnants move as if still alive, the shadow of the stitches far clearer on the wall than the stitches themselves. The temptation to move forward and touch these moving 'plants' is great; but they are forever cut off from the viewer by the very sheets of embroidery from which they spring. This division is at the heart of Glade-Wright's theme of extinction and loss.

In creating an exhibition environment of very low light with occasional spotting, Glade-Wright is tapping into the growing field of memorial display using psychological means to make more powerful the viewer's experience. Darkness makes the viewer uneasy and confused, producing a sense of loss of direction and even fear. Small beacons of light, once reached, offer little comfort, due to the

disturbing nature of the articles highlighted within. The ideas and manifestations of these memoria are most commonly seen in Holocaust architecture and in the display of associated museum artefacts, although recently the field has encompassed broader commemorative themes (for instance, plans for physical monuments to the destruction of the World Trade Center in New York). But to my knowledge, this is the first time that these psychological effects have been used to heighten the impact of contemporary textile work. Glade-Wright's exhibition is therefore significant not simply because of the work within it but because of the exhibition design and its strong contextual relationship to her theme.

Glade-Wright's desire to commemorate the extinction of Tasmanian plants in *Making Nature* is but the most recent step in her long journey through the natural environment. An earlier exhibition (*Souvenir*, University of Tasmania Gallery Newnham, Launceston) focused upon the destructive impact of humans on their environment by creating a suite of three 'Hawaiian' shirts patterned with tree stumps, dams and the Northern Pacific Seastar (an introduced marine pest which has devastated endemic species in the Derwent River). Glade-Wright's commitment to the environment has not changed: but her recent work displays her deepening understanding of her passion, and her far greater subtlety of communication in response to the concerns surrounding her.

Is *Making Nature* political? Any discussion of wilderness extinction is high on the political radar, especially in Tasmania, where conflicts over the issue have turned into wars of ideology and faith. But to categorise Glade-Wright's work as political would be to trivialise its impact. *Making Nature* is about grief: about



loss; and about her own, and our, need to remember the disappeared.

Article by Dr Astrid Wootton, General Manager of the Design Centre – Tasmania. She represents Tasmania on Australian Craft and Design Centres (formerly COA) and is Deputy Chairman of the Visual Arts Committee, University of Tasmania. Astrid Wootton worked as the Victorian Tapestry Workshop researcher, writer and resources coordinator for five years. She is an honorary Fellow of the School of Classical Studies, Fine Arts and Archaeology, University of Melbourne, and has written extensively on design, craft and art history in various publications. Dr Wootton lives in Launceston.

For the purpose of this article, only the wreaths and the exhibition design were discussed.

This article first appeared in Textile Fibre Forum, No. 86, 2007.



Ian MacLennan with students from the School of Visual and Performing Arts

Michael Edgar

A conversation with : **IAN MACLENNAN**

Dr Ian MacLennan is a professor in the Theatre Arts program at Thornloe University in Canada. He has worked extensively as an actor and director as well as continuing an active career as a scholar. In recent years he has concentrated, both in his research and in his practical theatre work, on the role of boy actors in Shakespeare's theatre and single-sex productions of Shakespeare in contemporary theatre. After coming to Launceston for the Australia and New Zealand Shakespeare Association conference at the Academy of the Arts in 2002, he returned in 2006 to devise and direct *The Squaddies' Shrew* and again in 2006 as part of a short Australian tour. He is currently working on a book *Single Sexing Shakespeare*.

In the Arts Forum held on Thursday 24 May at the Academy of the Arts, Michael Edgar, Lecturer in the Performing Arts speaks with Ian about his contemporary reflections on the single-sex production of *Squaddies Shrew*, performed at the Academy during Ian's visit to Tasmania last year.

The following is an excerpt is taken from the Arts Forum discussion.

Michael: *Squaddies Shrew* was a very, very funny production, showing students where Shakespeare might work, but it also gave people commedia dell'arte in a very contemporary way, how you can use that slapstick Renaissance style in a contemporary theatre.

Unfortunately, Ian had to leave very suddenly, after the first night, so he wasn't there to tinker with the production afterwards. However, I know Ian regarded it as an ongoing process that I think you wanted to do it again. Ian, I'm wondering what you took from this production that you would want to go further with, and is there is anything you've pondered having seen any other single-sex productions that you think 'yes, this is what I want to do with *Squaddies* now'?

Ian: The only thing that I really would want to change, and I think anybody who saw it would probably agree, was that the beginning of the induction was difficult. It didn't flow well enough from the improvisation we used at the beginning into the Shakespearean text before we actually started the play-within-the-play. I think one of the things I'll be working on is changing the beginning of the induction so that there is a bit more of a flow between the two types of scenes...

Photography: Peter Hammond

For those of you who didn't see it, we had this little scene where Sly walks in. We set it up where when you walked into the foyer there was a big banner which said "Australia's Defence Forces Talent Night", so that the whole point of the Squaddies being there was that they were coming to see this talent night. So Sly shows up 'three sheets to the wind' with his brew in his esky and Bartholomew, the Squaddie, is one of the first people in the Theatre, and he went and sat down right at the bottom of the stairs in the first seat. Of course, that's where Sly wanted to sit. And all that was improvised, not scripted, and in true commedia sense, you give the scenario, but you don't give the script.

Then Bartholomew went and got one of the Squaddies who was being the house manager (Chris Jackson) and he came down and tried to get rid of Sly. Of course that wasn't going to work, and finally he said he was going to go and get the MP's or something. At that point, Petruchio started with, "I feeze you, in faith" and that was the beginning of the Shakespeare text from the script, and there just wasn't a good enough transition for me. So I want to work on that.

Michael: It's a hard line in a sense, as the language is archaic.

Ian: Yes, it is, it's a real slap for the audience and I would have liked to have reeled them in a bit easier.

Michael: Can I try and put this in a bit of context, because as you pointed out, there's Propeller in Britain, doing all male casting and at the new Globe Theatre, Shakespeare's Globe Theatre in London, it has sometimes done all male, and all female productions.

Ian was telling me yesterday that there's actually a company in North Carolina called 'Chickspeare', which is an all female company in Shakespeare. So along with that sort of growth of same sex productions all over the world in the past 20-30 years, there's also been a renewal and interest in academic circles about what exactly Shakespeare's productions were like. For example, how boys acted, how the audience received them, what was the relationship between them as apprentices and the senior actors and masters, so both in the practical theatre world and academia, all of a sudden this has become of interest. Why do you think that is?



A scene from the single-sex production of *Squaddies Shrew*

Ian: I think that part of it is that there is an attempt (because things change so quickly), to recapture the past and to try to put the academic into practice. Sam Wanamaker, the American actor, was the real impetus behind the rebuilding of this new globe called Shakespeare's Globe in London, which is a reproduction, but we don't know it's an exact reproduction because we don't know exactly what Shakespeare's Globe looked like. But there is this attempt, and it opened in 1997, and it was built about 1994/1995 and they had a pre-season in 1996, but while it was in its infancy, Wannamaker did a teleconference in about 1991 or 1992 all over the English speaking world. There was Australia, New Zealand, Canada, United States, Britain and people were asking Wannamaker questions about why are you doing this and blah, blah, blah... and then somebody asked the question, which is the question I was most interested in really, and that was "If you are trying to recreate Shakespeare, are you going to have boys play the women?" Wannermaker said, 'No, you can't do that, no, that wouldn't work'. And at that point I thought, okay that tells me exactly how authentic this particular company is going to be.

It wasn't until Mark Rylands, who is the original Artistic Director (he has retired as of last year), came along that he started doing what we call Original Practices Productions. Original Practices Productions use what we understand to be the same costuming, the music and what little we know about staging practices of the period. Interestingly enough, he did have

all male productions, but he did not use boys.

Having worked and lived in Britain for five and half years and having seen some student productions like high school productions, there are boy actors, like young teens 12, 13, 14, 15 who could, if they wanted. Now I don't know why it's not being done, why they don't bite the bullet, shall we say, as I would love to see what would happen. Audience reaction would be very different I think today, than would be back then. I mean it was something that was accepted, women just did not appear on the stage. Women did appear on the private stage, but not on the public stage. Audiences back then supposedly were able to understand that this was a boy playing a woman but would accept that it was a woman on stage.

Michael: Some scholars do claim that audiences were watching a sort of homo-erotic...

Ian: Some people would argue that there is a certain homo-eroticism in it. I think that's one of the problems with it, it screams of peodophillia as soon as you have Romeo kiss Juliet, or something like that. So it is a cultural issue today.

ON THE HORIZON

by Professor Vincent McGrath

The Academy of the Arts is currently developing some exciting initiatives that will broaden study pathways for undergraduates and postgraduate students in the near future.



Photography: Ann Williams-Fitzgerald

The University, TAFE Tasmania and World Music Radio Inc plan to operate a radio broadcasting station from the Academy of the Arts. This will become an important site for teaching and learning and community engagement activities. We already have a narrow cast licence and, through World Music Radio Inc, have applied for a community broadcasting licence. Our plan is to use the medium of radio broadcasting and web streaming as vehicles for presenting student initiated creative arts activities such as radio plays and serials, comedy, scholarly exhibition, film and theatre reviews, interviews with interesting people from all walks of life, debates on topical issues, and new music and sound performances. The broadcasting site will function as an 'on-air' teaching environment

for aspiring directors, producers, presenters, arts managers, actors and performers and arts commentators and journalists.

Discussions are progressing very well on the formation of a joint education sector Studio for Music, Sound and Screen to be located in Launceston. The School of Visual and Performing Arts, University of Tasmania, TAFE Tasmania, Launceston College, Newstead College and industry bodies such as Wide Angle Tasmania are committed to a partnership of exploiting the full potential of technology convergence and visual and performing art forms in the creation and transmission of innovative music and screen product for a variety of cultural and communication settings. Sharing expertise, equipment and facilities will be a hallmark of the partnership. Importantly, the Studio for Music, Sound and Screen will involve students from years eleven and twelve at senior secondary college, TAFE diploma and certificate students through to PhD research candidates at the Academy of the Arts, University of Tasmania.

The Academy's special teaching, professional practice and research interests in the themes of community, place and change and the environment set within the Tasmanian context are likely to expand significantly in 2008. We are forging a number of community, business and education partnerships in Central Queensland that will enable us to undertake teaching, learning and research projects centred on sub-tropical and tropical environments, especially the Great Barrier Reef. The possibilities offered by the culture, place and communities of Central Queensland would provide an interesting point of difference to the distinctive nature of the Tasmanian lifestyle and our temperate environment. We are indebted to the Mackay City Council, particularly Mayor Julie Boyd, Marcella Massie from the Queensland Government Department of State Development and Trevor Davison, Head of Campus, Central Queensland University for their encouragement and support. I am pleased to say that Artspace Mackay Regional Art Gallery and Museum, Mackay Regional Botanical Gardens, Central Queensland Institute of TAFE and Central Queensland University will join us as community engagement partners in this exciting endeavour.

Sarah McCormack & **STOMPIN**

Sarah McCormack is a teacher of TAFE Tasmania's Arts Administration course. Sarah completed an Associate Diploma of Arts in Drama in 1992 and a Bachelor of Performing Arts in Theatre in 1994 at the University of Tasmania in Launceston. After a variety of co-ordinating and management positions with the Melbourne International Arts Festival, the National Circus Conference in Brisbane, Theatre North, Tasdance, the Tasmanian Circus Festival and the Gaiety Grande and Launceston Festival Sarah became Stompin's General Manager in 2002.

*The latest Stompin production *Home* tours Melbourne in September 2007.



Georgie Midson



Kjristelle Harvey

"*Home* is a rich collaboration between the artists involved and a powerful work. In this reviewer's opinion, it (*Home*) is Stompin's best work to date." Fiona Reilly, *The Examiner*, 25 November 2006

After rave reviews and sell out shows, Stompin is preparing to pack their bags, freight two large sea containers and a magnitude of Tasmanian hot contemporary dance work to Melbourne. Young dancers from Launceston will travel to Melbourne to remount Stompin's smash hit from 2006, *Home* with young dancers and community participants at the beautiful and significant heritage site of the Meat Market in North Melbourne in September 2007.

Arts House, a high profile program of cutting-edge contemporary art from across the globe and Stompin are joining forces to

present Stompin's most innovative and dynamic work, *Home*, to Victorian audiences. Experience the talents of Luke George and Bec Reid in collaboration with a talented group of young dancers and some of Australia's best artists to once again give audiences an innovative and dynamic opportunity to engage in contemporary dance.

The University of Tasmania School of Architecture students' large scale set, Ben Cisterne's lighting and Luke Smile's original sound composition will all be featured in a new context at the stunning Meat Market in Melbourne.

Home is a performance installation by young artists of dance and architecture students about the place we live and the living we create.

Photography : Patrick Ronald & Shannon McDonell



Why do students choose to study at the **ACADEMY OF THE ARTS?**

With the cultural and creative industries now representing the second largest market sector in Australia, new opportunities are emerging for graduates of the Bachelor of Contemporary Arts Degree (BCA). This industry growth in Australia tends to reflect a growing global demand for acquiring high-quality creative skills and innovative content that can be delivered through a variety of platforms, including the internet, podcasting, television, radio and mobile communications.

Students at the Academy of the Arts are encouraged to reach the full potential of their individual creative intelligence by developing work compatible with the technological environment. This ensures students are technologically conversant and well-prepared for the workplace at graduation time. The BCA also provides flexibility to concentrate on one discipline, or alternatively, to take advantage of the synergies between Music, Theatre, Visual Arts and Design.

The Contemporary Music program combines performance-based skills with opportunities to become conversant with areas of audio technology, visual technology, web-design, cross-media distribution, cross-cultural communication, presentation and creative problem solving.

A dynamic blend of acting, technical theatre, voice and speech, scriptwriting and the history of drama is contained within the Contemporary Theatre program. This is underpinned by a substantial theoretical foundation in contemporary and classical areas. Each year students perform in major productions in The Academy's state-of-the-art Annexe Theatre. Consequently, Theatre students are particularly well-positioned to make a valuable contribution to commercial business settings through the development of

strong inter-personal and effective presentation skills in oral and written formats.

The Visual Arts stream offers a broad range of studio-based units including ceramics, textiles, sculpture, photomedia, painting and drawing, supported by a selection of theory subjects. Studio units emphasise practical 'hands on' experiences complemented by conceptual and technical approaches that explore the power and significance of images and objects. Arts theory units provide opportunities for students to undertake focused studies of how philosophies, technologies and location impact the production and reception of the visual arts.

Under the guidance of nationally and internationally respected teachers, all BCA undergraduates are encouraged to realise their own potential in the areas of creative conceptualisation, artistic expression and confidence in broader areas such as communication and developing the necessary skills for effective research and analysis. This comprehensive training at the Academy of the Arts well-places BCA graduates for entry into employment or, alternatively, to continue studies through graduate levels such as Honours, Master of Fine Arts, Master of Contemporary Arts and PhD.

Photography : Ellissa Nolan

New staff profile : DR TROY RUFFELS

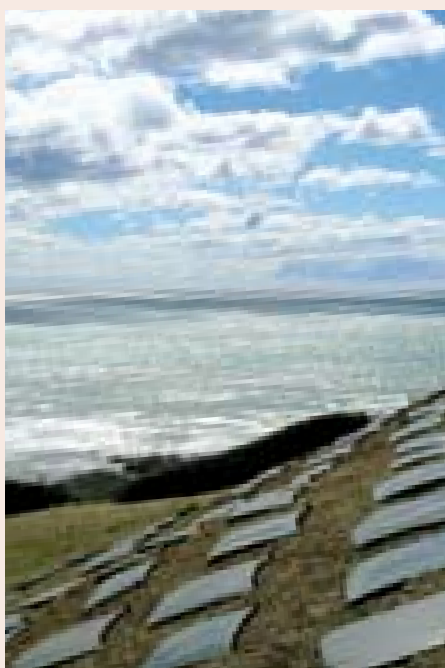
Troy Ruffels took up the position of Head of Photomedia at the Academy of the Arts in February, 2007.

Hood

A landscape intervention

Isle of Plenty - 10 Days on the Island 2007

'Hood' was commissioned as part of the Isle of Plenty Project, a statewide contemporary arts project, produced by Tasmanian Regional Arts for the Ten Days on the Island Festival 2007. The Isle of Plenty project saw three regional artists, Troy Ruffels, Nicolas Goodwolf and Sandra Lancaster, being commissioned to design and install three site specific landscape installations, reflected their region's unique identity, people and place in their artwork.



Photography : Top : Michael Rayner
Above : Angela Barrington



Troy Ruffels with 'Hood'

Each installation resonated within the local region, stimulating discussions and debate and connecting with a wider audience through accessible prominent locations and community celebrations.

'Hood' involved the placement of 150 car bonnets into the Don headland along Lillico Strait on Tasmania's North West Coast, and extended my ongoing fascination with the reflected image as a motif in visual art. The polished bonnets with a combined weight of over 3 tonnes were carted across a paddock and fixed to a steep embankment of parched earth and volcanic basalt rock using 450 star pickets, and over 400 metres of wire rope. Over a dozen volunteers secured the work in place overlooking the spectacular coastal vista, over a two day period.

From a far distance the work read as a digital brushmark in the landscape, suggesting the detached viewpoint many of us have of landscape - as something glimpsed only in passing, or viewed through the lens of a camera. Digital cameras freeze occasionally fragmenting and rupturing the picture plane in a series of pixelated marks on screen. The artwork, in this way was intended to be a 'glitch' in the unfolding experience of the landscape site, an ambiguous mark, encountered when travelling along the highway.

Hood was intended as both a playful intervention and a memorial artwork. Viewed from above the starkly polished black bonnets

reflected the Bass Strait and the far distant horizon; from below, the installation mapped washes of light and a continually

changing skyscape. The car bonnet was used as a metaphor relating to both loss of life and loss of environment. The automobile and the engine hood became a reflective tableau for the ephemeral and least fixable aspects of nature.

Integral to the concept for the work was that it would be shaped and transformed by the environment around it, and that those travelling the highway would be aware of its transformation under changing light. Installed in a regimented formation like solar panels, the car bonnets became imaging mirrors, radically transforming in appearance in direct response to the time of day, changing light, and weather patterns of the surrounding environment. At twilight, the black bonnets hovered like blue video projections above the landscape, while passing by under moonlight, one glimpsed a flicker of lights, like a ripple unfolding across pool. At other times, under cloud cover, the bonnets loomed dark and ominous set back into the hillside.

Above all, it was the very nature of the intervention that surfaced. Simply through the act of placing the car bonnets in the landscape the viewer was asked to consider their relationship to the landscape, to the environment, and to the automobile. It was a meditation on our relationship to environment, our dependency on oil for our way of life, and both the positives and negatives that result from this dichotomy.

Events : ISLAND TO ISLAND



A collaboration between
three international universities

March - September 2007

University of Tasmania
University of Hawaii
Universiti Sains Malaysia

Extract from exhibition catalogue
— Professor Vincent McGrath

Unlike many other islands, Tasmania is physically separated from the mainland as there are no connecting tunnels, sea bridges or causeways to facilitate inbound and outbound movement. From the air the island of Tasmania is a discrete entity and the lyrics sung by Tony Bennett 'in the middle of the ocean' have strong resonance. It seems to me that the locality and smallness of Tasmania in comparison to the mainland, or the 'big island' as locals affectionately call it, continue to be a powerful force in shaping our identity. The reliance on sea and air travel to places outside Tasmania means that our island community is potentially less mobile than those of other Australian states where there is no physical impediment to crossing borders.

Tasmanian islandness can be found in the rich local tradition of developing active and life-long networks of family and friends. Furthermore, islandness is associated with loyalties to local institutions, the participation in island events and the fierce protection of Tasmania's ancient and unique environment. Islandness is no more evident than in the forceful way Tasmanians gather together to

exploit the nature of place as a political weapon to win Federal concessions and favoured treatment, as well as deal with internal threats of insensitive development and unwanted change.

Personal identity and attachment to homeland go hand in hand in Tasmania. With a landmass of 6.8 million hectares and 488,948 people, the island is of a human scale in its accessibility. Nature is pervasive in all its forms whether one lives in the cities or the countryside and the sea is never more than an hour's drive away. It is almost possible to know of or have heard of just about everyone, or at least of their family. In a recent interview on the qualities of islandness Tasmanian author Richard Flanagan said, 'people here have as many vices as anywhere, but there is a culture of understatement, compared with the increasingly Americanised mainland – hyping – because it is a professional necessity for people over there. But you couldn't do that here because you'd be caught out immediately. People know the ordinary truth about you.'¹ Becoming known, as in being accepted, starts one on the long path to belonging in Tasmania.

¹ www.the-write-stuff.com.au/archives/vol-1/interviews/Flanagan.html



TASMANIAN CREATIVE ARTS SUMMER SCHOOL

9 - 18 JANUARY 2008

by Ellissa Nolan, Manager Tasmanian Creative Arts Summer School

The inaugural Tasmanian Creative Arts Summer School was held in January 2007. With over 200 participants attending the creative arts workshops in Launceston we appreciated the overwhelming support from the whole Tasmanian Community for this new creative and cultural event.

The Tasmanian Creative Arts Summer School is a community-based partnership between the University of Tasmania, TAFE Tasmania, the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery and the Launceston City Council. This year we are delighted to welcome Newstead College and Launceston Colleges to the partnership. Newstead College will offer the Newstead Rock College from 14 to 18 January and Launceston College will run their Concert Band Instrumental Program from 9 to 12 January.

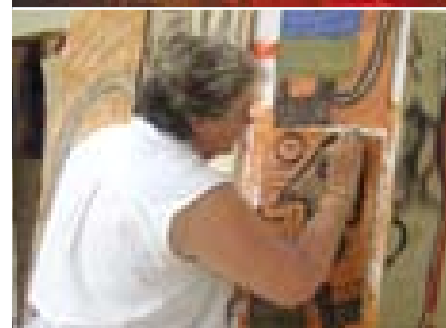
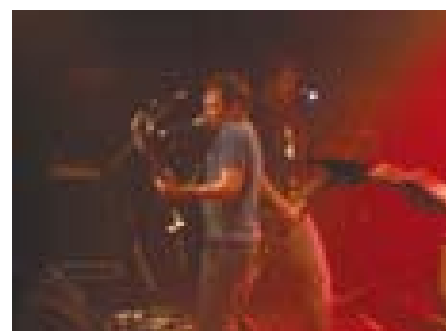
The Summer School is an exciting initiative for the City of Launceston and all of the partners are working collaboratively towards building a statewide and nationally significant event for Launceston in the January period.

Over 15 creative arts workshops will be offered during the 2008 Summer School. These

include: Sculpture, Painting, Contemporary Rock and Concert Band music programs, Theatre, Culinary Design, Black and White Photography, Computer Imaging, Ceramics, Drawing, Wilderness Studies, Art History, Background to Asian Theatres, Art in the City, Public Speaking and Textiles.

The creative arts workshops are open to the general public and also to existing University students who wish to attain a credit in the 8-day Summer Summer period. We are also inviting teachers and professionals to join us for a class in Summer, as a means to update their own creative skills during the holiday period.

For further information on the upcoming Tasmanian Creative Arts Summer School, please contact Ellissa Nolan on 6324 4423, email Ellissa.Nolan@utas.edu.au or visit our website at www.acadarts.utas.edu.au





Photography: Ellissa Nolan

Artist-in-residence :

by Dr Wayne Z Hudson,
Head of Sculpture

PROFESSOR ROGER GAUDREAU

Professor Roger Gaudreau lives and works in Québec, Canada. In March and April Roger was Artist-in-Residence at the Academy of the Arts. Roger Gaudreau received a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Québec in Trois-Rivières, [1981], and a Master of Fine Arts from the University of Québec in Chicoutimi [1996]. Roger has been teaching sculpture in Trois-Rivières, Chicoutimi, Montreal and Halifax for twenty years and during that time he has had 15 solo exhibitions and has received several awards. He has completed public art projects in Canada, Taiwan and Tasmania and has also produced site-specific sculptures for symposia in Québec, France, Germany, Italy, Taiwan and Australia.

Roger Gaudreau's recent work focuses on creating sculptures complementing the nature of the environment. In particular, Gaudreau is interested in ideas associated with time - time that is spent making the sculpture, the time that it will take to decay and change as the environment changes through growth and how the passing of time encourages us to re-evaluate the meaning of things.

The Residency at the Academy of the Arts in Tasmania has given Roger Gaudreau the

opportunity to create his tenth Rhinoceros. Many of the past Rhino's have been made from material that will break down over time. However for this work, Gaudreau has used 6 mm stainless steel rod to construct the outer frame or shape of the Rhino. The rod has been welded together maintaining an aperture (mesh construction) of approximately 60mm. The inside is filled with Tasmanian basalt rock that is visible through the mesh construction. The Rhino is 3.6 metres long x 1.6 metres height x 1.1 metres width and

is to be placed adjacent to the entrance of the Performing Arts facility at the Academy.

Why a Rhinoceros in Tasmania? Roger considers that global warming will change the way that animals will need to relocate in order to survive. He considers that the bears in Canada may move somewhere else and that the Rhino's could move to Canada. The Rhinoceros in Tasmania is an extended comment on this potential dislocation.

Hybrid Art : **GESTURE MACHINE**

article by Robert Lewis

Hybrid art maintains a strong presence in the Australian and overseas arts environment and an enormous body of interdisciplinary work has been generated in recent times. Gesture Machine Laboratory was formed in 2004 to foster cross-disciplinary activity at the Academy of the Arts, and the wider community. Dr Wayne Hudson, Robert Lewis and Dr David Sudmalis are three founding members of Gesture Machine. Most recently, Dr Andrew Peek, a published poet from the School of English, Journalism and European Languages, joined the group to contribute original poetry.

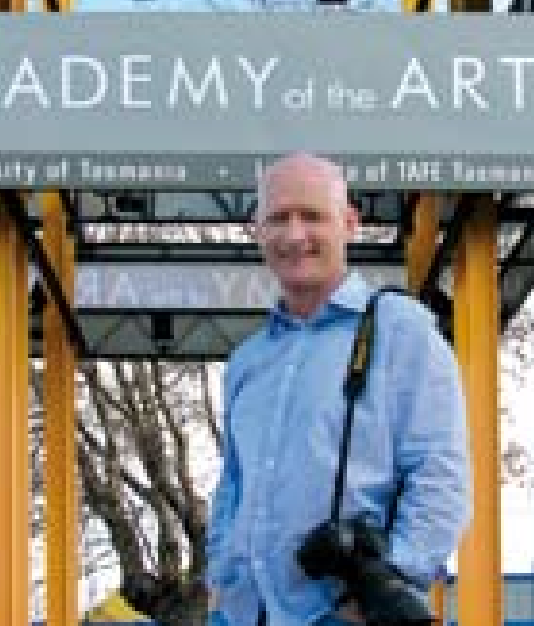
Gesture, body language and physical expression, like diverse forms of art, is a universally recognised form of communication and expression. The notion of Gesture, its qualities and communicative intentions can be seen in visual art, music and sound, sculpture and theatre arts of all genres, modes and styles. We are surrounded by gestural communication of objects, sounds, images and speech. All of these send signals through their unique form of gesture consciously and subconsciously.

The Gesture Machine Laboratory's aims are to combine all three art forms (sound, visual and performance) to create works throughout the year using 'gesture' as an underlining theme. The works can be blurred somewhere between performance, moving image and exhibition, however the term performance art may not always be a just and accurate term for most of the pieces. Some examples of work are 'Gesture Machine', exhibition, 2005, and 'Light', film, 2007.



Wayne Hudson and Robert Lewis

Photography: Ellissa Nolan



Stuart Shaw : interview by Stephen Watts CHANGING DIRECTIONS

Stuart Shaw came to TAFE looking for an opportunity to extend his skills in photography so that he could earn a living from his passion.

Stephen : We are interested to know what led you to decide on this change of career?

Stuart : For as long as I can remember I have had an interest in photography. In 1995, I bought my first SLR camera before setting off to travel the world for 6 months. Upon returning home with many photos to ponder, I realised there was a lot more to learn. With a thirst for knowledge and little spare time, due to a demanding building business and family commitments, I completed a photography course with Adult Education. From there I continued my interest as a hobby.

In late 2003, I was involved in a motor vehicle accident which ultimately put me out of business – it became too difficult to manage. I had to make a decision to change my career path.

Stephen : Can you please explain what aspects of photography hold a particular fascination for you?

Stuart : I have a particular interest in photojournalism. I feel that this type of photography is important and can make a difference to the way people see the world. It

has been proven, images that are so powerful have changed the minds of government and their political decision.

Stephen : So what sort of opportunities have arisen for you in the past 6 months?

Stuart : Although at first, I did not think it possible to make such a radical change from Builder to Photographer, my original thought was to study photography at TAFE with the idea of developing my hobby whilst I decided on a new career.

Last year whilst completing Certificate IV, I was offered one days work experience with The Examiner Newspaper. During the course of that day I was so stimulated that I asked the Examiner's Chief of Staff if I could spend another day there, which he accepted. From then on I kept returning with as much enthusiasm as my first visit. Soon enough, I was asked to put a resume forward when to my disbelief I was offered a casual photographers position. That initial job opportunity has given me the experience to gain further contract work with Tasmanian Life Magazine.

Stephen : How have you found your studies at TAFE?

Stuart : TAFE has given me a solid grounding in my chosen field. I feel I have made a tremendous accomplishment in a particularly competitive field. Success ultimately comes from a person's determination: however, gaining the right knowledge will undoubtedly give you the edge.

Stephen : What advice could you give others considering photography as a career change?

Stuart : My course in photographic studies at TAFE gave me the confidence, knowledge and opportunity to attend work experience at The Examiner, where ultimately I succeeded in gaining employment. Photography is one of those occupations that requires as much exposure as possible, both of yourself and your work in order to get a start. I have found working in the field of photography to be challenging, rewarding, inspiring and very exciting.



New staff profile : JOHN SWINDELLS

John Swindells heads up the screen and film studies studio at the Academy of the Arts.

John Swindells is a highly experienced filmmaker with a background in IT and marketing. Over the past fifteen years he has made five feature length documentaries as well as countless shorter films, corporate and informational videos, on subjects ranging from

comparative religion to schizophrenia, animal liberation to biography. John is passionate about finding the story in the idea and discovering the most effective way to tell the story, and his passion is undoubtedly infectious.



Photography : Elissa Nolan / Nicole Johnson

Daniel Lizotte : TURNING PROFESSIONAL

Each year, by generous donation of a \$20,000 Theatrical Development Award, Country Club Tasmania supports the professional employment by CentrStage Theatre Company of a recent theatre graduate from the University of Tasmania's School of Visual and Performing Arts (SVPA). As the recipient of the award in 2007 I've been undertaking a variety of roles for CentrStage and the SVPA, working primarily as the company's Publicity Officer. CentrStage is the University of Tasmania's own theatre company and this year we're boasting a wide variety of shows that are being produced at the Annexe Theatre. The company utilises the expertise of staff from the School of Visual & Performing Arts, professional performers, graduates and invited members of the community. CentrStage has a key role in Launceston as an incubator of new theatre, providing an avenue for the development of local actors, writers, directors and artists in associated fields as well as enriching the studies of the SVPA's theatre students. Whilst the students don't perform on stage in CentrStage productions, they do gain valuable, hands on experience working backstage on CentrStage shows. Personally I'm very grateful to have had this opportunity as a student, as I'd never seen a lighting desk in my life prior to my studies at UTAS!

My year in this position has been a huge learning curve. In December of last year I was given some brief on-the-job training from the previous award recipient. I got a comforting pat on the back, was told everything was going to be fine and to call if disaster loomed. Then I was promptly issued with two handfuls of

keys. I'm half way through the year and I still haven't found each key's respective door. It was at that moment that I realised that 2007 would be a challenging year. There were lots of locked doors that I now had the keys to. I was, and still am, looking forward to each and every new challenge. I'm grateful for every new show, every new character and every new face I meet and connection that I make. I've been able to stretch myself in many new directions. I've been able to act, appearing as Tony Ross, an obsessive stalker in Rebecca Gilman's psychological thriller *Boy Gets Girl*. I've been able to direct, working with a talented cast and crew on Patricia Cornelius' *Love*, the gritty, confronting tragedy of three Australian heroin addicts. I'm about to head into a weekend of Dress Runs for Noel Coward's classic comedy *Hay Fever*, in which I play the bad mannered, melodrama-loving Simon Bliss. And to round out my year I'll be performing in and directing part of what could possibly be the biggest theatrical event Launceston has ever seen, *Tamar Tidings*, by Stella Kent. This historical and entertaining epic is to be performed on a floating stage at various locations up and down the whole length of the Tamar River. A mixed team of theatre students and our new neighbours, the architecture students, are currently designing the stage. Director Peter Hammond has done a wonderful thing in combining the second and third year theatre students with almost all Tamar Valley theatre and dance troupes into what promises to be an incredible community journey and theatrical destination.

Throughout the year I've been working closely with staff and students at the Academy, overseeing part of the ever-popular Student Directed Festival and as musical director for the Second Year's Classical Production. As a music lover this was a real highlight. I was given permission from the director to wrangle together all the musical members of the first year technical crew and, with the help of a fellow 2006 theatre graduate on violin and my lovely and talented girlfriend on piano, we formed a raggedy bunch of medieval minstrels. Being involved in a Classical Production at that time of year had its pros, namely in that you could beat Launceston's winter chill by wearing your costume tights under your trousers all day...

I feel so very grateful to the Academy of the Arts, to CentrStage and to Country Club Tasmania that, for a year, this is my job. Doing what I love, working with creative and inspiring people in diverse and dynamic arts environment. Every morning I walk through an ever-evolving art gallery on the way to my office. That's (literally) a beautiful thing. I stretch out my neck in looking forward to the remainder of the year. I'm sure it will be full of more challenges and growth. There will be laughter and creativity and fun and theatre galore. We are living in an age where, despite all the marvellous technological advancements in communication, it is getting easier and easier to isolate ourselves. But I've been lucky enough to spend the last three and a half years of my life making real, heart-to-heart connections through theatre and my job. And I believe that these connections will last me a lifetime.

ALUMNI ACHIEVEMENTS



Dr Shaun Wilson

Dr Shaun Wilson was awarded a PhD from the School of Visual and Performing Arts and the School of Philosophy at the University of Tasmania. He has exhibited nationally and internationally in solo and group exhibitions, including the 1st Athens Biennial 2007, Museum of Contemporary Art Fenosa Union, Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Bilbao Arte, Centre for Contemporary Culture

Barcelona, Thailand New Media Arts Festival (MAF05), Australian Centre for the Moving Image, Institute of Modern Art Brisbane and the Centre on Contemporary Art Seattle.

Shaun is currently teaching Video Production, Experimental Video and Media Theory at the School of Creative Media, RMIT University in Melbourne.



Juneo Lee

Juneo Lee is a lecturer in the National Institute of Education (Nanyang Technological University) in Singapore. He teaches art theory, two-dimensional studies and art education. In recent years Juneo's visual arts practice has explored issues closely related to

postcolonialism, particularly ideas of self and community. Driving this work is an attempt to highlight significant and now somewhat distant traditions and traditional imagery with a sense of the present.



Junko Go

Junko was born and raised in the country town of Shiga in Japan. She studied English at university in Kyoto and became an interpreter after graduation. In 1984 Junko moved to Poughkeepsie, a rural town, in New York state, where her interest in art began to develop. Excited by this new passion, she studied basic drawing and painting at a local college in USA. On returning to Japan, Junko opened her own studio where she had numerous exhibitions.

In 1992 Junko Go migrated to Australia and later settled in Tasmania. She was looking for a better quality of life and more creative inspiration. Since becoming a permanent resident in Australia she has been searching for her personal identity - redefining her cultural identity within the context of a new place now called home. A constant

stand in her work has been in the similarities rather than the differences between East and West. She believes that there are always universal values, regardless of language, race and culture.

A lifetime of thoughts and experiences inform her work in a narrative manner. In recent works, Junko's focus has been in the eternal duality of good and evil, male and female, purity and impurity, and ugliness and beauty.

Junko has been a regular exhibitor at Handmark Gallery in Hobart since 1996. She won the Eskleigh Tasmanian Art Award in 2001/2002 and in March this year had a solo exhibition at Gallery 101 in Melbourne.

Junko Go completed the Diploma of Visual Arts at TAFE Tasmania and the Bachelor of Contemporary Arts at the University of Tasmania.



Sam Curtain

Sam Curtain of Hobart is a Diploma Student in the TAFE Screen Production Course at the Academy of the Arts, Inveresk. Sam's 14 minute drama, Minotaur, was recently selected for

competition in the "Action in Film" Festival at Long Beach, California. The highly stylised 14-minute film is based on the classic Greek myth of the same name.



Sumeena Keshow

In 1997 Sumeena enrolled at UTAS to study visual arts in Launceston, as a one-year trial to see if she liked it. After a year, it was a clear decision - she loved it! One particular subject, Gallery Studies, sparked an interest for Sumeena. "It was a revelation to find out what was involved in the organisational side of preparing an exhibition, rather than just participating as an artist".

As a student, Sumeena extended her skills by volunteering for various arts organisations.

This voluntary work paid off, as it led to employment with the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery after she graduated.

Sumeena now has a position within Public Programs at the National Gallery of Victoria. "However, even as I'm now very much enjoying a career within the arts industry, I don't foresee the time where I will stop painting"!



Chua Ek Kay

Chua Ek Kay was born in China and moved to Singapore during his youth. He studied under the master Chinese painter Fan Chang Tien for over a decade. He graduated from the University of Tasmania with a Bachelor of Fine Art in 1994. Chua's work in calligraphy, painting and writing, shows a tapestry of complex influences. His art seeks a balance between the representational subject and the discipline of the Chinese brush. Chua has also sought to incorporate modernity and the

contemporary in his art. This is reflected in his work of Streetscenes and Lotus series. In 2005, Chua had a solo exhibition of his large scale painting "Water Village" at the Shanghai Art Museum. It was a joint exhibition organised by the Shanghai Art Museum and Singapore Art Museum. Chua was awarded the Cultural Medallion in 1999 and also served as a Council Member of the National Art Council of Singapore from 2001-2004.



AWARDS : Sue Henderson

Sue Henderson has been awarded a University of Tasmania medal for excellence in academic achievement. University medals are won on the basis of outstanding study results and are the highest award available throughout undergraduate study. Sue gained first class honours in the Bachelor of Contemporary Arts degree with her research project titled:

Vertical views and precarious positions : Re-presenting Cataract Gorge. This project explored the effects of verticality within the landscape and a repositioning of the viewer within a series of large scale vertical format ink paintings. Sue is studying for a Master of Fine Arts degree and tutors in the drawing and painting studios at the Academy of the Arts.

Public Art Commission : **MARISA MOLIN**



Concept sketches



The marquette



Computer rendered plans



The work in progress

Marisa Molin is currently undertaking a Master of Contemporary Arts Degree at the School of Visual and Performing Arts. Last October Marisa was awarded a large public art commission to produce a sculpture for the atrium at Mater Mothers' Hospital in Brisbane.

Marisa says of her work, "The inspiration of the sculpture is an amalgamation of the Moreton Bay fig tree, the pregnant form and the sisters of mercy all of which are the essence of Mater Mothers' hospital". The curves of the sculpture are subtly referencing a full term pregnant figure without being literal. The lines imply a sensual, maternal quality while the surface textures are intimate and alluring.

The sculpture sets out to create an inviting and enchanting atmosphere to the courtyard for residents and visitors to the maternity ward. The completed sculpture will be 8 metres in height and made from cast aluminium, bronze, and led lights. The work is scheduled for completion and installation in September 2007.

Images supplied by artist.
In studio photography by : Urban Arts Project.

"...and all the trees in the field shall clap their hands".

ISAIAH 55 [12]



Interview & Photograph by Ellissa Nolan

LANSANA FEIKA

: Student from Sierra Leone

Bachelor of Contemporary Art Student

I recently interviewed Lansana Feika at the Academy of the Arts. I anticipated that he had been through some difficulties and intuitively felt that I was probably unprepared for the depth of his life experiences.

After some initial chatting, in a quiet voice and poised manner, Lansana shared his story.

I came from Sierra Leone, West Africa where we have experienced 11 years of civil war. That was the reason why I fled out of the country, because of the fear for my life. It was during that time that both of my parents were killed. My father was killed because he was a prominent person in the community. As I am the only son, I feared for my own safety. I went to Ghana as a refugee for 8 years in a camp and I was without my family, my wife and 3 children. We have five children now. Fortunately I came together with my family in 2001, when my wife came to the refugee camp in Ghana. I am currently cut off from any contact with my family in Sierra Leone, as many relatives went their own way or died. From 1997, I have not had contact with anyone.

The best thing that has happened in my life was when Australian Government granted us assistance to travel to Australia to start a new life with my family here. This happened in February 2005 and we have been here since then. The Migrant Resource Centre helped us to settle, and some of the schooling privileges I was denied in my life, I have been able to attain here, such as gaining admission at University level to study. At the beginning it

was difficult because the University culture was quite different to what I have experienced. But now I have settled and have tried to express my feelings, about who I am and my background.

I'm interested in photography, which has been my childhood passion. Presently I am doing a project, multiple exposures. Why? Because in our country there is a series of lives and the layering images represent different areas of my life. That actually gives me the inner peace that I am looking for, because I can express what I feel and what is in me, through my work. An example of this can be seen through my work 'The eagle flower'. This is all of my story. The darkness and expression and emotion and then coming out of that into light. The eagle represents the elements of freedom and strength.

Last year's artwork was about my culture and background. I received an academic award in ceramics for my pottery. It was the 'Pot as Narrative' unit, where I could express stories through the artwork. My work was based on personal experiences and my cultural background. One of the themes was on medication. We have many traditional pots and we look at it like there is some kind of spiritual power is in the pot. Everything has to

be prepared in the pot, such as herbs, to give certain powers to heal the sicknesses. I also created another pot which represents the secret societies in my tribe which we have to practise. For example, The womens' secret society is where they train the girls to prepare for marriage and the home, and also go through the process of female circumcision. It's not a cultural practice that is any good. It causes sickness to the girls, as they use the same implement on each one, and if one girl has a disease, that disease is then transferred. It is a very unhygienic practice.

My other work is about the slave trade that was practised in Africa. There is Bunce Island, where the slaves used to be taken and there they were distributed to various areas around Africa and the world. I described that through my artwork. All the pots for the medication have to be black, this is the culture. It was only for Bunce Island I used green to represent the vegetation around the Island.

On the 6 July I became a citizen of Australia. I have a very bright future. I am sure that after my graduation I will be able to contribute to this community through my artwork and creativity.



ROSS BYERS : Study Abroad Program

Completed Master of Contemporary Arts Degree in 2006 - University of Hawaii

In Semester Two in 2002 I went to study at the University of Hawaii as an exchange student. I stayed there for five months. It was an amazing experience because even when I came back my whole life had changed. The overseas travel had made me feel uncomfortable in my own environment. I think this was because travelling had changed my concepts and made me feel like the whole world wasn't so intimidating. That's why an international student exchange is so important because it brings you closer to other cultures. You can't be so insular and the experiences make you question your own beliefs.

Interview by Ellissa Nolan.
Artwork photograph supplied by artist.

I made a lot of decisions following that trip. This was due to my increased cultural awareness and broadened perspective on life.

I travelled with my friend Ben. When we stepped off the plane in Hawaii the humidity hit me like a brick, and it was winter! They don't experience the same extremes in temperature. If I hadn't left Tasmania I would never have known that other people feel things differently.

A piece I made at the University of Hawaii was a comment on the juxtaposition between the Polynesian and Caucasian cultures. It's made from an old grandfather clock that someone was going to get rid of. I pulled it apart and recycled it with some other stuff that other people were just throwing out. I also went to a fabric store as the material had to be right and I just picked up other stuff, like an old cabinet and put it all together. This piece was quite out of character from my usual style, but it was the experience of living and creating in Hawaii that brought it out of me.

Our teacher was really strict with the studio class. We had to do set projects with definitive timeframes and she maintained the strictness with everyone. She thought that I was onto something interesting with my work. She

encouraged me, but I also had to engage her with my ideas. In hindsight I think I did some really embarrassing things. There seemed to be lots of expectations of me, being a foreign student from Australia. Of course there were circumstances where there were cross-cultural misunderstandings, but we worked through these misunderstandings of each other's culture. Actually, it was a good way to learn how to bridge misunderstandings.



ANGELA MILLER

: International Student from California



"Tasmania? Isn't that in Africa?"

I smiled through a long sigh. It was the third time that day I had been asked that. It was my fourth garage sale in two weeks just a month before I moved. I finally decided to give up on answering the 'where 'r you moving?' question. I confess, it wasn't that I was tired of explaining but I was a bit tired of justifying. Why was I moving half way across the world to go to graduate school? I guess it falls back on a little motto I like to say: "When I come to the end of my days I do not fear looking back on my life and regretting the things I have done but regretting the things I have not done." I had already taken an odd path in my life of obtaining my Masters in Forensic Science and ending up working backstage for eight years at a The Old Globe Theatre in California. It was through what may seem a crazy decision that I found my passion and love. The theatre and directing. Then through a referral I found this lovely town holding a University which offered a Master of Contemporary Arts Degree. Ah. Contemporary Theatre. The small, intimate gritty stuff that I love.

"No, Tasmania is in Australia." I responded.

Blank stare.

Then the question that always follows, *"Oh...but why in the world are you going all the way over there?"*

Sigh.

Lets see, a great theatre program in a gorgeous part of the world with the cleanest air and water. Tucked in a small valley with a nice, relaxed, quiet town holding some of the kindest people I have ever met. Nope, can't imagine why I would want to come all the way over here from the chaos of California.

But it has been better than I have imagined. The open minds and excited support of my thesis that I have found here at school has been exhilarating. You see, this constant weaving river of life has taken another turn. I found

myself applying my directing skills to alternate media promotion of the theatre.

Hmm I can hear you blinking through that familiar blank stare.

Yes. I'm working on redefining the image of theatre via current technology. Using the internet, email and websites to reintroduce the theatre to the public. Including things like Playlars™.

"Um... Play what?"

Playlars™. A little term I coined one day last year combining the term [theatrical] plays with the modern day term of movie trailers. Why? Because I would love to see all these hard working theatre students have a job when they graduate. An actual theatre job that is. So how about breaking down those stereotypes of the 'unattainable theatre' for the general public and getting some 'bums on seats'?

Ah. But I digress. I'll save that soapbox for another day and continue to relish in my experiences here.

"California? Why in the world did you come all the way to Tasmania?"

Sigh.

"Why don't we head down to the pub, because I'm sure I can't answer it in under 300 words." I reply through a smile.

Photograph supplied by artist.



Interview by Ellissa Nolan

Masters student : **NG SEK-YAN (SEKI)**

Ng Sek-yan, or better known as Seki, recently decided to uplift his life from Kuala Lumpur Malaysia to live and study in Tasmania. He is currently undertaking a Master of Contemporary Arts Degree at the Academy of the Arts. Seki commenced his degree in February 2007 and is planning to complete his degree by July 2008.

I recently asked Seki about his decision to move to Tasmania to study, and how he felt he is progressing in his Masters coursework degree.

Ellissa : Seki, we're interested to know what motivated you to study at the Academy of the Arts in Launceston?

Seki : Since I was young, I discovered that I had a strong interest in the art field. I knew that one day, I would get involved in some occupation that deals with artistic talent. When I obtained my diploma in graphic design from Alif College (now known as Alpha College), I embarked on a new journey into the working life. I was attached to an advertising agency for almost two years.

You may say that I was fooled into believing that advertising was a good way of exploring my artistic talent because the experience proved otherwise. It was more of an

Photography : Ellissa Nolan

exploitation of artistic skills because at the end of the day, I could never express my creativity. It was always about what the client wants and making your superiors look good. I figured that if I were to continue to please everyone else, I would end up the bitter one. That's when I decided to do something I've always wanted to do; express. Then, I remembered that my college had recognition programs with various universities and UTAS offered this Masters course. I was taken in straight away! During one of Professor Vincent McGrath's visit to Malaysia, my college and agent arranged for an interview with him. Shortly after that, I'm here!

Ellissa : How are you finding the experience of living in Launceston so far?

Seki : To be honest, I had a little bit of trouble adapting to the lifestyle here. I've always been a very adaptable person but back home, everything is fast moving. It's like living in a life full of auctions. Either it is something one cannot afford to get, or it is about a few bidders bidding to get the best deal there is out there. And if one was too late, the chance may have passed by already. In the end, it is about getting a head start. Compare it to living here, everyone seems to have all the time in the world to go about their businesses and yet, still be able to enjoy the finer things in life at the end of the day.

Ellissa : Can you tell us a little bit about your Masters project?

Seki : My course is a major in painting. The project will be three semesters long in which I will explore the feelings and emotions of a common skateboarder in common situations. Skaters have been labelled as a hazard to pedestrians on the sidewalks and, clearly, it is not an art that most people can find to appreciate. As a result, skate parks have been built. What most people fail to understand is that a skater does not like to confine themselves to skating in parks. They want to be able to just roll on their boards be it as a form of recreation or just transportation just like how bicycles are. They want to skate on the streets and not get booked for a ticket, hence the title of my project; "Out in the Streets". My project aims to seek not too much of appreciation of skaters but more of the acceptance into the general public. The medium I will be using for

the paintings will be pretty much a mix of watercolours and graffiti art tools.

Ellissa : Have there been any challenges posed by choosing to talk about skateboarding in the watercolour medium?

Seki : I have had not much debate relating to that issue. The very reason I chose to use watercolour and graffiti art forms has significance to my concept. Watercolour is a medium that most people can accept and in contrast to graffiti, graffiti is seen as a rebels' art. But what I try to create is an artwork that could coexist with one another and still be able to create beauty.

Ellissa : Have you identified industries that are you interested in working when you finish your studies?

Seki : Actually, what I really am interested in is teaching. I have always worked with my younger peers back home. Being an officer in the Boys' Brigade, I often share my knowledge and experiences with my members

in the hope of guiding them to succeed in the outside world. I've always encouraged them to share with the rest of us so that everyone could benefit. All this, I must say that I owe it to my family for bringing me up by sharing with one another. A profession in the academic arena is not out of the question. One thing's for sure, advertising is something I will try to avoid getting back to in Malaysia.

Ellissa : Is there any advice you would offer to someone interested in moving from another country to study at the Academy of Arts?

Seki : Study the courses offered in the Academy of Arts. Make sure you know what is good for you. Be prepared for all aspects of study; financially, logistically, mentally and artistically. Make the decision and stick by it no matter what! Get yourself over to Launceston and enjoy the course of your choice! Opportunities are golden, so make the most of them – don't waste them in your life.





School of Visual and Performing Arts

University of Tasmania
Locked Bag 1362
Launceston TAS Australia 7250

T +61 3 6324 4400 F +61 3 6324 4401

E AcademyAdmin@utas.edu.au

W www.acadarts.utas.edu.au

CRICOS Provider Code: 00586B



Academy of the Arts

TAFE Tasmania
PO Box 1308 Launceston TAS Australia 7250

T +61 3 6336 2400

W www.tafe.tas.edu.au